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Editorial Comment

MORE REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

When, at the annual meeting of the M. L. A. in 1915, the Association of Modern Language Teachers of the Central West and South was formed, it was the final step preparatory to the founding of the JOURNAL, which in fact began to appear the following autumn. Before that there had existed in the East a number of groups that had been discussing the feasibility of uniting to publish a magazine. The formation of the central association with a vigorous group of officers in charge brought a volume of support to the proposed publication that seemed to assure its success. The enterprise of the newly chosen business manager of the JOURNAL in securing advertising contracts confirmed this hoped for success, and the persons who pledged financial support in case of a deficit were never called on for contributions.

The JOURNAL was directed during the first three years of its existence by editors chosen by the various regional associations—New York State, New England, Middle States and Maryland, New Jersey, Central West and South—that had pledged their support to the movement. From the first, however, it had been evident that the movement should be a national one, that administration by the various regional groups was difficult and complicated, and that some sort of body should be constituted to which these groups would commit their interests and the interests of the profession generally, the most obvious of which would be the direction of the JOURNAL and the organization of new groups of teachers in other sections until members of the profession the country over should be united by closer ties for the advancement of modern language teaching in general and, in particular, for solidifying and strengthening the support of the JOURNAL as a national professional organ.

With this idea in mind it was proposed to establish a National Federation, the administration and control of which should lie in an Executive Committee chosen in certain proportions from the various regional associations, this Federation to function as a sort of holding corporation rather than as a society to have professional meetings for the reading of papers and the discussion of class room problems. To this end the draft of a proposed constitution was published in the JOURNAL (III, p. 290) and it is this constitution, with a few changes of detail, that was adopted by a vote of the various regional groups and is now actually in force. Under its provisions the Executive Committee, the membership of which is published in the inside cover of every number of the JOURNAL, is composed of four representatives from the Central West and South,

and one from each of the following groups: Middle States and Maryland, New England, New Jersey, New York State. It is also provided that other regional associations may be admitted—presumably to representation in the councils of the Federation—"by a majority vote of the Executive Committee, which shall fix the basis of this representation." According to a letter from the secretary of the National Federation, published elsewhere in this issue, a new group must have a minimum of two hundred subscribers to the JOURNAL in order to be eligible for affiliation.

The members of the Committee are chosen for two years, they are to meet annually for such business as filling vacancies on the staff of the JOURNAL and "to take such other measures as are in the interest of the Federation." The present editorial board was chosen by the Executive Committee and, beginning with October 1919, the board has been directly responsible for the conduct of the magazine to the Committee, the secretary of which, as is usual in such cases, carries on most of the active business.

The plan has worked exceedingly well as far as can be judged. The relations of the various groups to the JOURNAL are definitely fixed and there can be small occasion for disagreement or jealousy. The officers of the component groups take a justifiable pride in promoting the interests of the JOURNAL in their territory, both in securing subscriptions and in encouraging their fellow members to submit articles suitable for publication; and both the Business Manager and the Managing Editor meet with a ready and helpful response to every appeal for aid or counsel.

It is clear, however, that there should be an increase in the number of affiliated groups and that the influence of the Federation should be extended to parts of the country that are not now definitely represented in its councils. West of the Alleghenies there is only one such group, except the recently formed Southern California Association. The south, the southwest, the states west of the Mississippi, the territory between the Rockies and the Sierras, and the northwestern states should be organized in regional groups, of which the existing state associations would form nuclei. The territory of the Association of the Central West and South has never been delimited. It was purposely left vague in the beginning. It seems quite clear, however, that no one secretary can or should be expected adequately to look after such an immense stretch of country, that the meetings of this group can be attended only by members from three or four of the states about Chicago, and that the formation of new regional groups in the regions away from this center would result in the quickening of local interest, in the stimulation of the group officers to bring into their organizations all their colleagues in modern languages and to secure stronger support for the JOURNAL.

The eastern states are well organized, as far south as Virginia. The central western group (M. L. T.) has a large membership in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and draws a considerable scattering of subscribers to the JOURNAL from states further away. This organization can not, however, be expected to cover effectively all the states of the Union except those in the eastern associations. It is true that many of the states that lie south of the Ohio and west of the Mississippi have a smaller percentage of modern language instruction than in those already well organized, but it is also true that instruction in these subjects will increase in quantity as time goes on, and that the formation of new regional groups can contribute to improving the quality and interest of the teaching and, in this way, forward the general cause. We have been asked more than once about the general status of the Federation and what steps a group should take to be eligible for representation. This shows that the interest in such things is growing, that many state groups feel their isolation and yet do not know how to put an end to it.

The whole question is, of course, a problem for the Executive Committee. It would be a splendid thing if, in addition to the existing regional organizations, there were at least two in the old south, one in the southwest, two in the territory between the Mississippi and the Rockies and north of Texas, one west of the Rockies and two on the Pacific coast. A systematic campaign to this end should accomplish much. We are sure that men and women can be found in the several states to undertake the task according to the suggestions of the Committee. There would be, it is true, some outlay of money for clerical help. The constitution provides that such expenses shall be met from the funds of the JOURNAL, which last year were not sufficient to pay in full for the magazine. Nor is the surplus great at the present moment. Such a campaign, however, would benefit the JOURNAL so directly that the small amount needed would surely be forthcoming. When the present groups were got together it was at the expense of some effort and cooperation on the part of the persons interested rather than by the aid of an office force. The task before us is similar, if more difficult geographically. But now, we have the JOURNAL as a medium for publicity, and there are signs that a campaign would be successful.

The foregoing remarks are intended to be merely suggestive. We do not pretend to prescribe how the campaign shall be conducted nor what new groupings should be worked for. Decisions about this would have to be taken by the Executive Committee working in conjunction with interested persons in the regions to be organized. Our desire is to have the Federation march west and south, establishing itself through close affiliation in the numerous

states which it has not as yet reached. The JOURNAL would thus reach a larger audience and the members of our profession be brought more to realize their share in the common task. It is to be hoped that friends of the movement in territory not now affiliated with the central body will not be content unless at least one new regional group is formed each year, until the Federation has become truly national, geographically as well as in intention and spirit.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS IN THE CENTRAL WEST AND SOUTH REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

For the purpose of simplifying bookkeeping and avoiding duplication of accounts, subscribers in the above mentioned Regional Association are hereby notified that from March, 1921, till notice to the contrary:

(1) Subscribers in the States of OHIO, INDIANA AND MICHIGAN will please send in their subscription, \$2.00, as formerly to Prof. C. H. Handschin, Miami University, OXFORD, OHIO.

(2) Subscribers in the REMAINING STATES of the Central West and South Regional Association will henceforth please send in their subscription, \$2.00, to Mr. Edward L. C. Morse, Business Manager, 7650 Saginaw Avenue, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, making checks payable to the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL. In the case of subscribers belonging to the Regional Association of the Central West and South, fifty cents thereof will be forwarded to Mr. Handschin, Secretary-Treasurer.

(Note: This rule does not apply to the other Regional Associations: New England, New York State, Middle States and Maryland, New Jersey or Southern California.)

EDWARD L. C. MORSE, *Business Manager*, MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL
C. H. HANDSCHIN, *Secretary-Treasurer*, Central West and South Assn.